

# CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF

POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

*Fourth Series*

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 476.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1873.

PRICE 1½d.

## THE TROUBLES OF A TICKET-CLERK.

I OFTEN wonder if any of the many people who have need of my services in my official capacity, would care to know anything of the pleasures and troubles attendant upon being a booking-clerk. I think I may say, without fear of contradiction, that there is not a more harassing, unthankful business than mine. To have to stand all day long the coarse chaff, the abuse, the attempts at fraud, and the cross-examination of querulous people; and when the day's work is over, to have to make up books and money amidst a noise and confusion compared to which the Tower of Babel must have been quite peaceful! I am employed at one of the largest metropolitan stations, at a salary of twenty-five shillings per week; and I think that by the time the reader has got to the end of my narrative, he will say that money was never more fairly earned. But come and accompany me one day. I arrive at the office at five o'clock, and after checking the accounts and money of the clerk who was on late duty last night, I open the window to book the workman's train. The office smells most offensively; the gas, turned down low, is left to burn all night; the smell of fish which itinerant vendors are going to take down by the train, the smell of stale tobacco, and the sulphur from the engines, all combine to salute my olfactory organs. A workman is the first to come up. 'One to H—.' He has the end of his saw peeping out of his basket uncovered, and I say: 'You must cover that saw before I give you the ticket.'

'You railway folks are very particular.' And so saying, takes his ticket, and passes on. A porter now makes his appearance, accompanied by an elderly female, who is gesticulating wildly. She has some excess luggage to pay for (which, by the way, consists of herrings and haddock), and is highly indignant at having fourpence to pay, and demands to know whether I wish to see her in a workhouse. I politely reply that I hope not, but point out that unless she pays, her wares will not be allowed to go by the train. This con-

vincing argument causes her to find the necessary fourpence, which she pays, descanting all the time upon the voracity and extortion of railways generally, and this one in particular; and after booking a few more people of this class, I close the window for ten minutes, and get a cup of coffee, which, while I am discussing with bread and butter, I am broken in upon by a porter.

'Please, Mr E—, how do you charge for rabbits?'

'How are they packed? If one in a hamper, charge ordinary dog rate; if several in a hamper or hutch, charge ordinary parcels rate.'

'All right, sir. And Mrs Walters has brought half a hundredweight of German sausages. How am I to charge?'

'Oh, we've got a special rate for them; half parcels rate.'

I have just finished my breakfast, broken as it has been by repeated calls at the inquiry window (not to mention a woman who has been tapping on the ledge with a coin of some sort all the while), and open the window to book the parliamentary, and my first passenger is the before-mentioned old lady, who is in a high state of nervousness, and says: 'I want a party ticket to S—.'

'Nine and threepence halfpenny, ma'am.'

After dropping her purse with all her money on the floor, and managing with difficulty to pick it up, she pays me 8s. 9½d. and cannot be made to understand that she has to pay me another sixpence:

'I've given you what you asked me, haven't I? How much more do you want?'

'Sixpence, ma'am.'

'That will make it 9s. 9½d.'

'No; don't you see that coin is a florin?'  
'God bless my soul! so it is. Here's the sixpence; and where do I change?'

'At Muddleby and Stoke Pogis, madam.'

'How long before the train starts?'

'Twelve minutes.'

'Do you know how far it is from S— to C—?'

'No, madam, I do not.'

'When is there a return train from S—— today?'

And after consulting a time-table, I inform her that the train returns at 3.40, when she leaves, after keeping me just six minutes booking her; while the passengers behind are bullying, swearing, and joking at me. 'Very slow for a young man,' 'I don't think he's quite awake yet.' These and similar remarks are made by the rest of the passengers. A man applies for a party to B——. I inform him that this is no party to B——; that there is a third class, but not party, which he cannot understand.

'I'm sure I've had a party to B—— before.'

'Not by this train; by the 5.45 you might have had one.'

'Well, I must take a third-class ticket, that's all; but I consider it nothing more nor less than a disgraceful swindle. I'll write to the papers tomorrow, and expose it.'

The old lady who had booked to S——, makes her reappearance. 'You didn't give me my ticket.'

'O yes, I did.'

'I assure you, you did not; I haven't got it.'

'Have you felt in all your pockets?'

'Yes.'

'And your purse?'

'Yes. What shall I do?'

'You'll have to take another ticket. Stay; turn your umbrella upside down.'

She does so, and the ticket falls out. She goes away muttering, but whether thanks or not, I cannot tell. The horse-loader now comes up, accompanied by a man who wishes to book a horse to L——. I have to take 18s. 6d. and am very much pressed for time, what with other passengers, and other horses; and this man, seeing as he thinks a favourable opportunity, puts a farthing down head side upward. But I promptly reject it. I was not so fortunate last race-time, for then they managed to pass a farthing on me for a half-sovereign in the hurry of business, which I had to make good. My last passenger is a crusty old gentleman, who is very annoyed at having been kept waiting for five minutes.

'Disgraceful accommodation, to have to wait in a dog-hole like this, where I wouldn't put one of my hounds, sir! I'll write to Mr J——; and if he don't warn your jacket for you, it shan't be my fault.'

'Where do you wish to go, sir?'

'I've told you once. C——, first class; and just now the starting-bell rings, and he has to run to the train.'

I now close my window again, and try to get on with my accounts; but it is impossible, for the inquiry window is besieged.

'Please, sir, when is the next train to Hatson?'

'Three o'clock.'

'And the one before that?'

'There is none.'

These and similar questions drive me to a verge of madness, and sometimes I forget myself, as, for instance: 'Does this station go to S——?'

'No, ma'am; it stops in London.'

'Don't be impudent, young man; you know what I mean.'

'When does the next train start?'

'Five o'clock.'

'Oh, that is a long time to wait. Is there a respectable hotel about here?'

'O yes; and I give one of the porters instructions to see her to the nearest hotel, for which piece of business, and carrying her four boxes, weighing unitedly just over three hundredweight, she rewards him with a fourpenny-piece.'

Another lady knocks at the window; I again open it.

'There is an excursion announced by your line to P—— on Saturday week. Can I have my ticket now?'

'No, miss; we don't issue them till the morning of the excursion.'

'Oh, I wish you could let me have it now. I have come up all the way from Putney on purpose to get it.'

'I'm sorry, miss, but the rules won't allow it; and indeed if they did, I haven't got the tickets yet.'

After various small trains, I open up for the day-mail, and the first thing that greets my eyes are three or four young gentlemen about sixteen, who are evidently going back to school, and who ask for half first-class tickets with the most unblushing effrontery. I inform them they are evidently over twelve, and will have to pay the whole fare, at which news they evince much disgust, murmur something about cads, &c. and pass on.

A lady now comes, and books herself, servant, and large dog, to S——; but just as I am handing her change to her, a small toy-terrier that she has concealed in her muff makes a bark, and I say: 'You'll have to pay for that dog, madam, three shillings, please.'

'I consider it a disgraceful thing that I should have to pay as much for Jip as for Flo;' and then, with a rather heightened colour at being discovered in so paltry a trick, she walks towards the train.

'I want one officer's and one soldier's ticket to Y——, and make them out upon separate tickets.'

'Have you a card, sir?'

'No, it's in my portmanteau. My name is Rag of the Plungers.'

'I have nothing but your word for it.'

'Well, that ought to be sufficient for you.'

'I must have a card or some corroborative evidence of your being an officer, or I cannot grant you a ticket.'

A thought seems to strike him, and he calls his servant. 'Bing! bring me my portmanteau here; my name is painted on the end.'

'That will be quite sufficient, thank you.'

'Sir,' says the excess-luggage officer, coming up, 'this lady told me she had nine passengers, but I find she has only six—namely, three whole tickets, and six halves, and her excess comes to thirteen shillings and sixpence, which she refuses to pay.'

'This is a most extortionate charge. I merely came up to buy some groceries in London, and I never was charged before.'

'Then there is every reason to believe that you are considerably in the Company's debt. I do not know whether you know it, but groceries in hampers do not come under the head of excess luggage, and ought not to go by passenger-train at all.'

'Well, I shall pay the money under protest, and my husband shall write to the superintendent about it, as I consider it a barefaced swindle.'

After several other unimportant passengers, I

close the window, and begin to look at my correspondence for the day. Firstly, a letter from the superintendent : 'Sir—Mr Walters states, that on Monday you booked him by the 11.23 to L—, and as the train did not stop, he was carried on to R—, from which place he had to take a fly. As you ought to know, the 11.23 does not stop at L—, I will thank you to explain why you booked him.—Yours, &c.'

And my answer : 'SIR—This gentleman was booked by me in error. I am, however, bound to remark that, as this gentleman is a regular passenger, and knows the trains as well, if not better than I do, he must have travelled by it on purpose. I will be more careful in future.—Yours, &c.'

And now a letter from the audit-office, the department that gives us clerks more trouble than all the other departments put together ; they will write a letter about the most frivolous thing—see letter : 'SIR—On your abstracts for July, you enter to C—, O should be 1. Please explain by next train, certain, as to this error. Yours, &c.' My answer : 'SIR—I note yours of the 14th. C— O should be 1. Will alter my abstracts, and note for future.—Yours, &c.'

The next is from an entire stranger, on a postal card : 'SIR—Please inform me by return whether there is a train to F— about midnight.—Yours, &c.' As there is no stamp for reply, I burn this communication ; to reply would cost me a half-penny, at least, and would be a dangerous precedent.

The other night, a young lady came up and wanted a second-class for O— ; but she had only 14s. 8d. being short of 4s. 5d. ; but on her giving me her father's address, I trusted her with the remaining money ; and this morning I get my reply : 'SIR—Herewith receive the 4s. 5d. you lent my daughter. Please send receipt by return.—Yours, &c.' But as he never thanked me, or sent a stamp for reply, I never answered him.

Some time ago, a young woman with a baby at her breast was crying at the station. I asked her what was the matter ; and she told me that she had lost the half of her return excursion, and could not get back. She told me she was a soldier's wife ; and when I offered to lend her the 1s. 8d. necessary to make up the money to take her back, she told me a pitiful tale, gave me an address at the barracks at V— ; said her husband was there ; blessed me, and left me, promising to pay the money in stamps. As I never received any stamps, I began to have some doubts as to the truth of her story. I wrote to the station-master at V—, who sends me the following answer : 'SIR—The woman must have been a rank impostor, as the 7th Dragoons have not been here for two years.—Yours, &c.'

I have trusted so many times, that I have now lost all confidence in people, and refuse to trust the very smallest amount. There have been several unimportant trains, and I am now going to open up for the five o'clock express, and the first passenger is a gentleman whom I trusted with a first return to R—, costing 52s. 4d. in consideration of his leaving his gold watch and chain as security.

'I've come to pay you the 52s. 4d. You ought to think yourself confoundedly lucky to get such good security.'

'I don't know what you mean about being con-

foundedly lucky. You ought to be confoundedly grateful ; this isn't a pawn-shop.'

'Such insolence ! I'll report this matter.'

'Do.'

'Sir,' says a lady, 'I beg to report this porter for incivility, and refusing to carry my luggage,' and I, though I am very loath, am obliged to take the lady's name, note the report, and send it to the superintendent.

'I want a first-class to D—, via S—.'

'You can't go via S— by this train. You must go via L—.'

'I hate that road, it jolts one's inside out. Why the deuce can't I go the other way ?'

'Because the train doesn't go.'

'Well, I know that ; you needn't have told me that.'

'I want two second-class tickets and two halves to C—.'

'Twenty-six and threepence, please.'

And after having stamped and cut the tickets to C—, she says : 'Did I say C— ? How very provoking, I meant F—.'

I change the tickets for F—, and charge the extra fare ; and she returns almost immediately, saying : 'There are a lot of very disagreeable people in the second-class ; I must trouble you to change them for first.'

I demur rather, and she commences : 'Well, Mr Impudence, what are you here for, pray, if you are not to attend to the public ?' And as I utterly refuse to change her tickets again, she leaves me in high dudgeon.

'Mr Booking-clerk, can I not take this dog [pointing to a full-sized pug] into the carriage with me ?'

'No, madam ; he's much too large.'

'I hate this line. I wish I had travelled by the other ; they never object to a pet dog.'

'If I take a return to D—, for how long will it be available ?'

'Till the day after to-morrow, sir.'

'Oh, then, I must take a single ; this is the most illiberal line I know of. I never travel by it when I can go by any other. I wish the government would take them ; it would very considerably lighten the fares. Twenty-six shillings first single to D— ; it's preposterous ! Bah !'

'Have you seen a young lady dressed in blue, rather dark, book for H— yet ?'

'Really, miss, I have so many passengers that I do not notice their dresses.'

'Well, I'll take two tickets to H—.' And just as the train is starting she comes back : 'Oh, my friend has not come ; will you give me my money back ?'

I give it her, but her friend just coming up, the ticket is again issued, and paid for. Just as the train is about to start, a gentleman in a first-class carriage is seized with an epileptic fit, and has to be taken out of the carriage into the waiting-room, causing the train to be delayed full three minutes, and as it is slowly steaming out of the station, I see the lady with the dog under one arm, her mouth full of pork-pie, rush out of the refreshment-room and wildly gesticulate to the train to stop with her umbrella. And after booking up this train, I am off duty.

I have no doubt that many who read this will say it is highly overdrawn ; but it is not, and the things I see every day only go to strengthen the

saying, that 'truth is stranger than fiction.' There are a great many people who, when they get off paying, or get wrong change, imagine that they are doing the railway company, but such is not the case ; and I am glad to make this announcement public, for I am sure there are a great many people, who, if they fancied that the booking-clerk would bear the loss of it, would return the money. Out of the pittance we are paid, we have to pay any losses we may make, make good for any counterfeit money we may take, be in the provident club, pay any fines that may be inflicted by the superintendent's people, guarantee his honesty in a hundred pounds at a cost of fifteen shillings a year, and to keep himself respectable. I could not, in the limits of this article, treat as I could wish, nor can I portray with sufficient feeling, the many troubles to which we are exposed ; but it is in the hope that it may make the reader more tolerant towards our shortcomings, that I have given this Day's experience of a Booking-clerk.

#### THEORY OF LONG LIFE

How long do people in general desire to live ? Few persons know their own minds on this subject. When very young, they practically look upon themselves as immortal ; though, if pressed, they may allow that of course they shall die some time, a great while hence, when they shall have had enough of all that is pleasurable in life. But coming more closely to the point, how many years do they allow themselves ? Girls always, at fifteen, and boys frequently, hardly care to look much beyond forty. At that terrible age, when they have reached it, the matter wears altogether a new face ; years have come to be reckoned at their full value, and they hesitate to fix upon any period at which they would willingly slip away from this bank and shoal of time, lest Providence should take them at their word. They now revel in the glorious uncertainty of life ; they may die, it is true, but also they may live, nobody knows how long. The lengthened career of the antediluvians transcends their hopes, and perhaps their belief ; but Henry Jenkins lived a hundred and sixty-nine years, and that half-fabulous Hungarian of whom Coray speaks only suffered defeat in the war with time when he had beheld the waters of the Danube flash and sparkle in the golden light of a hundred and eighty-five summers.

Talk of commonplace topics ! What is more commonplace than life ?—ay, or what is more commonplace than death ? Yet, how much do we know about them ? Has any one ever explained what life is, whether short or long ; or why it won't endure indefinitely ; or why, in fact, it should be arrested at all ? We say that such is the law of nature ; and though we know no more about the law than the law knows about us, that is the sum and substance of all we can say. What is a law of nature ? Who established it, and for what end ? In the act of being born, is not the necessity of death implied ? And if death be a necessity, are not the time and manner of it a necessity also ? The soldier's faith that 'every bullet has its billet,' which reconciles him to what we call the chances of the battle-field, may have a far wider application.

We all love to speculate on the accidents and circumstances of life, and in secret cherish some-

thing like the notion that, by certain arts and contrivances, we may steal a march, as it were, upon destiny, and put off the evil hour, at least for awhile. This is the notion which has led to the fabrication of books on the *secret of long life*; though, when we come to estimate what all they say amounts to, we usually find that we have had our labour for our pains. We may sometimes laugh, either with the author or at him ; but whether we laugh or cry, our persuasions and convictions are pretty sure to remain what they were at starting. To write a good book on long life, two requisites are indispensable, which are seldom, if ever, found together—first, the writer must have gone through what he writes about, and have carried along with him, up to the close vicinity of the cypress, the power to think philosophically, and to write well. It is mere impertinence to imagine, in youth, that we can forestall the wisdom which experience often bestows on old age, as some compensation, perhaps, for the many drawbacks which are necessarily implied in the mere fact of its existence. To be old is necessarily, in many respects, to be weak ; and to be weak, if we may adopt Satan's logic, is to be miserable, doing or suffering. Yet, as we have said, the mind, when healthy, often preserves its force and clearness in spite of years :

The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,  
Lets in new light through chinks that time has  
made.

No doubt it is very possible for a young man to say smart things about old age, and to lay down a fanciful map of the way by which you may reach it ; but the stuff of experience is wanting, and instead of it, you have only the guesses and fancies of one of the uninitiated. The mind goes on gathering up ideas to the very verge of the grave, as if it looked forward to some other field on which to make use of them, and never says to itself, 'I know enough,' but, with almost childish eagerness, strains after the apprehension of knowledge, attainable or unattainable. It is in this respect like the horse-leech of the Proverbs, whose appetite is insatiable. Hobbes, when he meant to write a book, retired, as he used to say, to read over leisurely his own ideas ; but as he read them over, he found them prolific of new ones, just as though if we travelled through space with the intention of observing all that is now visible to us of the universe, supposing it to be the whole, we should find at every step new stars and constellations coming into view, and convincing us that what we at first regarded as the utmost limit, was only the beginning.

A contemporary writer on longevity puts forward the comic notion, that space may be a vast cone, of which few of us can expect to reach the apex. But a cone is a determinate figure, and can therefore bear no resemblance to 'the void and formless infinite' which obviously space is.

One element of long life is the repression of the idea that we ever regard it as long. The day in nature breaks as brightly and as freshly now as it did a thousand years ago ; and in the vigorous mind, all wholesome pleasures rise every day as brightly and freshly on the soul. Nor is it at all evident why any one should doubt that the flavour of existence is sweet to-day, because it was sweet fifty years ago. If there be any difference, it is

in our power of apprehension—the things and their qualities are for ever the same. Mankind are apt, nevertheless, to inquire, when a man lives to be very old, how he managed to resist the inroads of time so long. A man of a hundred and twelve, to whom, when young, we put this question, replied : ‘I didn’t manage it, my boy ; I never thought about it, but went on living, and doing what I had to do, just as everybody else does.’

‘But everybody else does not live as long as you have lived.’

‘No ; because their constitutions don’t hold out so well.’

‘But didn’t you do something to make your constitution hold out ?’

‘Not that I know of ; I minded my business, and lived quite like other folks.’

Walter Savage Landor used to relate an anecdote of one of our judges, which belongs to the present subject. Being on circuit, two old men were brought before him as witnesses, and, according to custom, he began to chat with them, among other things, about their age, for the purpose of giving a moral lesson to the young barristers.

‘Well, my good man,’ said he to the first witness, ‘how old may you be ?’

‘About eighty-seven, my lord.’

‘I daresay, now, you have lived a very sober life?’

‘Yes, my lord ; I haven’t been tipsy for the last sixty years.’

‘There !’ cried his lordship, turning to the gentlemen of the bar, ‘you see what a fine thing sobriety is ! The witness looks as though he would live twenty years more.’

The barristers nodded assent. In his turn, another witness came forward, who looked particularly hale and robust.

‘And how old are you, friend ?’ inquired the judge.

‘Ninety-five, my lord,’ was the reply.

‘Ninety-five ! I’ll answer for it, *you* have led a sober life—haven’t you ?’

Witness hung his head, and answered : ‘I don’t like to say afores all these gentlemen.’

‘Never mind ; speak out.’

‘Well, then, my lord, I haven’t gone to bed sober for the last seventy years.’

At this his lordship looked rather blank, and the bar smiled. The judge then said : ‘We will proceed with the case, gentlemen.’

It is customary, in speculations on this subject, to attribute a protracted existence to the qualities of the climate, to occupation, to the habits of life, or, as Hippocrates does, to air, water, and situation ; and all these things, doubtless, exert some degree of influence on the condition and length of our lives. But it requires no little skill to interpret these circumstances. The Turkish gentleman who, according to the vulgar theory, lives well in Cairo or Damascus, seldom enjoys so long a life as the hardy Arab who subsists chiefly on dried dates, a little coffee, and water, when he can get it. The Osmanli, with all appliances and means to boot, seldom beholds even the threshold of ninety years ; while the Bedouin, whether sheik or camel-driver, often reckons up his hundred and twenty years of life. Midway between sixty and seventy, you may see one of these sons of the desert ride sixty miles a day on a dromedary, run as lightly and rapidly as a boy along the sand,

rise with dawn, talk cheerfully all day, and this on nothing stronger than water. Some, perhaps, may fancy that the life of such a man is of no more account than that of one of our agricultural labourers, who will not be admitted by our fashionable philosophers to have any ideas at all, and scarcely, therefore, any life. But how are we to classify ideas ? Must we regard as such only those notions which we become possessed of by artificial means ? The children of the desert are far from being wanting in ideas, though they generally bear a different character from those which flourish in Europe, amid hedgerows and streets.

The Oriental is more conversant with the idea of God, of nature, of the force and character of the elements, of rain, showers, and storms, of stars, constellations, the howling wilderness, and the weakness of man when he opposes his powers to those of the whirlwind or the lightning. We hold as a rule, that those who are constantly thinking of their comforts, their conveniences, or even of their health, are not so likely to attain longevity as those who give no thought to the matter. Behold the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet, during the span of life which nature allots to them, they throw a halo of beauty over the spot they inhabit, and only fade when their time comes. It is the same with strength, and enjoyment, and life among men, when, without wearisome anxieties, they perform their duties, and take no thought for the morrow. A stripling philosopher, who will hardly allow himself to be more than a boy, talks at peremptorily of long life, and of the practices which insure it, as if he had tried them himself, and found them answer. Three elements, he says, constitute the whole apparatus of longevity—ideas, independence, and indolence. Apropos of the last, Cicero, with whose words our philosopher is doubtless acquainted—Cicero, we say, dwells with easy eloquence on the pleasures and advantages of indolence. But how and when enjoyed ? Or how enjoyed to advantage ? What we call indolence, or perfect leisure, may be only mental stagnation, which is notoriously adverse to a wholesome state of existence.

It is certainly easy to talk of ideas, but how are we to get them ? Are they to be such as spring up spontaneously like wild flowers in the mind, or must we grub about and toil, and consult the speculations of philosophers, living or dead ? Ideas are plentiful enough, but then, they are generally old acquaintances, though, to conceal their identity, they may have put on innumerable disguises, on the banks of the Euphrates, the Nile, the Ilissus, the Seine, or the Thames. Why, however, should we discard them because they are old friends ? Why do we travel far and near in search of an original thought, when the link of communication between man and man is perhaps more felicitous, more fraught with golden associations, more productive of delight than the newest idea that ever came forth from the mint of genius ? We fear that human life would generally be very short indeed if it depended on the possession of original ideas. Like Juvenal’s virtuous women, they are rare birds upon the earth. After all, is not an idea more valuable in proportion as it is more familiar ? What is more common than the idea of wife, child, parent, friend ? Nay, does not the every-day phrase, human love, involve in

it a vaster world of happiness than a whole swarm of new-minted thoughts, whatever image or super-scription they may bear on them? According to the Hebrew epicurean, there is nothing new under the sun—why, then, should we seek for what is not? Had we Suliman ben Daoud here with us, and were to ask him whether he knew anything about a steam-engine, he would answer, that he certainly did, because he was well acquainted with all the elements of which it is composed—iron, coal, water, steam, air, &c.; and this in some sense would be true. But what we are in search of, it may be said, is not new elements, but new combinations. Has any one ever reckoned into how many positions the six-and-twenty letters of the alphabet may be thrown? If not, the combinations of thought which, after a fashion, they represent to the mind must be still more difficult to be counted. Yet, if you look carefully through many of the new compositions which spring forth like mushrooms from the rank field of thought by which we are environed, it will perhaps be matter of wonder, how thinly they are distributed over the groundwork, how much is made of a little, with what admirable industry the poor and the trivial are made to appear respectable, substantial, worshipful, and with how great satisfaction the author regards what he has made, and declares it to be very good.

The second element of longevity, *independence*, lies open to much more question than even ideas. Whether it will lengthen or shorten life, depends entirely on the use made of it. And what is independence? Is it an annual income of a certain amount, or freedom from ordinary trammels, or exemption from the requirements of duty, or the fact of standing altogether outside the circle of domestic relations? In whatever sense we take it, there is little to be said for its claims to be regarded as an element of long life. To be engaged in acquiring an independence is, in most cases, better than to possess one, for when your endeavours have been crowned with success, you will have parted company with Hope, the sweetest, dearest, and most sustaining companion that man ever finds on this planet. Take independence in what sense you will, this is equally true.

Of all the relations into which a man enters, marriage is that which exerts most influence on his mind and body, on his powers of study, on the development of his affections, on the bringing forth of all the hidden qualities of his character. The intellectual element in his nature, without the softening and humanising effect of domestic love, might, at first sight, be expected to absorb the whole man, and render him a giant in mental achievements. Practically, it has, as a rule, no such effect. Few monks have distinguished themselves for original invention, for great thoughts, for an expansive philosophy, or for anything implying superiority in the qualities which raise one man above another. It is beneficial to the most active minds to have the current of thought occasionally broken upon, and diverted from the channel of systematic investigation into the calm, sweet delights of home-life, of wife, of children, of playful sportiveness, which gives to man in his period of greatest force something of the careless frame of mind which gave freshness to his childhood. Marriage, therefore, should be regarded in general as a help to long life, and should

be called in to a man's assistance as soon as he has completed, or nearly completed his studies—we say nearly completed, because in many cases the companionship of a wife is of great service in directing and giving a higher aim to the intellectual force. Some are of opinion that the contracting of marriage ought to be deferred till the fervour of passion is over, till youth has lost its bloom, till the companionship of women is rather desirable as a friendship than as a source of love. Aristotle thought that eighteen years for the woman, and thirty-five for the man, were the likeliest periods respectively to insure happiness in marriage; but the Spartans, whose institutions had been framed by one of the loftiest intellects ever concerned in the business of legislation, acted on a different principle, thinking that persons of nearly the same age would love each other more ardently, and harmonise better together.

As a rule, early marriages are better than late ones, better for the woman especially, all whose maternal duties are less exhausting to the constitution, more productive of health and beauty to the offspring, and of happiness to all around her, than at a later period of life. Tacitus observes that the ancient Germans, the most robust and warlike nation with which he was acquainted, eschewed early marriages; but when he comes to explain what he means by the phrase, we find that he thinks it late enough to defer marriage to the age of twenty. Charles James Fox, who was perhaps as good a judge as Tacitus, brought into the House an act for fixing the majority of women at fifteen, and in the speech with which he introduced it, put forward reasons which the country in general thought conclusive, though the legislature did not. As one swallow does not make a summer, so neither is one example sufficient to serve as a basis for a general conclusion; yet it is worthy of remark, that one of the most extraordinary instances of longevity among women, recorded in Roman history, is that of Clodia, who died at the age of a hundred and fifteen, and in her youth had been the mother of fifteen children.

Among the eccentrics who have speculated on this subject, the notion appears to be cherished that politics are inimical to longevity; but Talleyrand, Metternich, and even Louis-Philippe himself, may be cited as examples of men who reconciled politics with length of days. Palmerston is often referred to as a sort of Nestor among statesmen; but one who died in his eighty-second year can hardly be regarded in that light. When he was in the Foreign Office, indeed, a comparatively few years before his death, he looked as if nature had meant him to flourish through a whole century. His face was full and fair, his hands were plump and white, his voice was strong and musical, and his walk that of a man of forty, though his hair was white as snow, and extremely thin. The interval between the Foreign Office and the Premiership was short, yet, when he stood at the head of public affairs, half a century appeared to have passed over him. His head was deformed by a huge wig; his form was shrivelled; his cheeks were sunken; his eyes had retreated far back into his head; his hands, once so plump and white, had become gray and bony; and his noble voice had lost its music. This change had not been brought about by application to public business, but by some inherent flaw in his constitution,

which, after remaining invisible for many years, suddenly made its appearance and broke him down.

To have a good chance for longevity, an originally good constitution—that is, a sound internal mechanism—is of immense advantage; though to this primary excellence we must needs add carefulness in the art of living. Even philosophy does not wear men out, unless when their constitutions are naturally weak. Voltaire, who, at his birth, was put into a quart-pot, could never by any other mode of life than the one he chose, have been floated on to eighty-four; whereas no one was surprised to see Theophrastus toddling about the Agora at a hundred and seven, or Democritus enjoying his last laugh at Abdera, when time had wreathed his brow with the laurels of a hundred and nine years. The lives of such men, always active, and therefore always pleasant, may be regarded as worth more than a thousand years of such vapid and worthless existences as those of the Yoghis, even though it should be true that they sometimes reckon up two hundred anniversaries of their birthdays. They do nothing to adorn or soften human life, but instead grovel in self-torture, and the hideous gratification of vanity, as long as they deform the earth. If there be a secret of long life, it is nature only that holds possession of it. Man neither knows nor can know how it may be fabricated; but when the germ of longevity has been conceived in the frame, it may either be suffered to spring up, flourish, bear fruit, and then, in obedience to the hidden law which originally gave it force, decay, and become extinct, when that force has been expended, or, by perversely counteracting the designs of nature, be cut short in its career, so that the vitality originally meant to endure possibly for a hundred and eighty-five years, may at any intermediate stage be forcibly quenched. Like clocks, the machinery of our frames may be wound up for this or that length of time, and go on ticking for that period, if left to itself; but it is no doubt possible to put a spoke in the works, and stop them by vice or folly, whenever our madness may prompt us to such a deed. It is within every one's experience that hundreds of their acquaintances, with good chances of longevity, have literally thrown away their lives through sheer perversity of conduct. They would die, and their wish has been gratified.

#### MURPHY'S MASTER.

##### CHAPTER XI.—PROMOTION.

TOWARDS morning, and when the sounds of disorder from beneath had at last ceased, Robert was about to retire to his berth, when suddenly he heard a cry of 'Help, help!' from the direction of the captain's cabin. Apprehensive, he scarcely knew of what, he rushed towards it, when on his way he was arrested by a repetition of the cry, not from where he had expected, but from the cabin occupied by his patron. It was uttered in muffled, half-suffocated tones; and finding the door locked, Robert flung himself without a moment's hesitation against it, and forced it open. Mr Kavanagh was alone, sitting up in his berth, with the skull-cap on that he now wore night and day, and pointing with shaking finger to some object—

an imaginary one, as it turned out—in the centre of the cabin. The moonlight which streamed in on him at the little window shewed his staring eyes, his trembling lips, his features palsied as if with excess of terror. 'Help, help!' he continued to cry in a hoarse whisper. 'Keep him off! keep him off! I say. He struck me first; I swear it.'

'Who struck you, Mr Kavanagh? There is no one here,' said Robert soothingly.

'There is, there is—there, there, with his strangled face!' and the bare stretched-out arm pointed quivering where nothing was to be seen. 'Help, Murphy, help!'

'I am here, master,' answered Murphy from without. Then pushing hurriedly in, and seeing Robert, he whispered huskily: 'Be off, lad; you are not wanted here.'

Robert heard him, but took no notice: he had, he deemed, as much right to be where he was as Murphy had; nay, more, for it was clear enough that the latter was much intoxicated, and therefore unfit to be of service to his master; and, moreover, the insolence of the man's tone was such as might well excite antagonism.

'Do you hear, you fool?' continued Murphy savagely. 'You are not wanted here.'

'Yes, yes; take him away,' muttered Kavanagh, huddling himself in the bed-clothes. 'His mouth is bleeding. There, there!'

It was clear to any person who had the use of his senses that these words could have reference to no visible being; but no sooner were they uttered, than, as if taking them as a positive command, Murphy threw himself on Robert with the fury of a wild beast, and dragged him to the door. The suddenness of the attack for the moment overcame the lad; but he soon recovered himself, and grappled with his assailant, not without effect. Had they both been on equal terms, indeed, the conflict would not long have been doubtful, but Murphy, being far gone in liquor, lost his footing, and fell on the cabin floor, with Robert above him. There they writhed and struggled, till presently Maguire appeared, half-dressed, and far from sober-looking, at the open door.

'What is it, Dick?' inquired he. 'Is it money you're wrangling for?'

'Put him out!' roared Murphy—'put him out!'

'Nay, it's an eviction, is it? Then you may just put him out yourself, for it's contrary to my principles to lend a hand to it.'

'The master don't want him here,' gasped Murphy, for Robert's hand had fastened on his neckerchief to some purpose. 'He's got the fit on him.'

'Oh, that's another thing,' replied Maguire gravely.—'I am the last man to interfere with an honest rough-and-tumble, Master Chesney, but this exhibition must positively close.' He stooped down over the combatants, and seizing Robert, who was still uppermost, by the neck, compelled him, on pain of suffocation, to let go his hold; then

swung him outside the cabin-door, as easily as though he had been a cat, and closed it. Like a cat, Robert alighted on his feet, and sprang at the door, though a moment's reflection must have convinced him that it would be madness to attempt to push his way against two such antagonists : he had forced the lock in the first instance, but the opposition he now encountered was far stronger than that of bolt or bar.

A chuckling sound from within proclaimed the sense of superiority enjoyed by at least one of the besieged, and convinced him of the uselessness of his efforts. Furious and baffled, he retired to his own cabin, not to sleep, but to reflect on the humiliation he had so unjustly suffered. He was no tale-bearer, but he was thoroughly resolved to lay the whole matter before Mr Kavanagh, and if not righted by him, to withdraw from a service degraded by such companionship as Murphy's. In the New World, a man might make his own way without a patron. Still he could not forget that he was under great obligations to Kavanagh, nor forbear to pity his present condition. A London lad, in the same position in life, would probably have been at no loss for the right name for the attack to which he had been so lately a witness, but to Robert it seemed some uncommon disorder—perhaps an epileptic fit.

Days went by, and on the morning of each, Robert presented himself at Kavanagh's cabin, only to be refused admittance in Murphy's dogged tones ; but this, and a certain offensive grin with which Maguire now greeted him, only made him more intent upon his purpose. On the sixth morning, he was admitted. He found Mr Kavanagh looking very ill and pale, which touched him ; and when he held out his wasted hand for him to take, and welcomed him even more kindly than usual, his wrongs somehow lost their proportions, and became at most a grievance.

'So I hear you have been to ask after me every morning, Robert ?'

'Yes, indeed, sir ; but Murphy denied me admittance. He said I was not wanted.'

'Well, well, he is gone now, and you are here,' urged Kavanagh smiling. 'He's a rough fellow, and, I know, resents another's shewing me any regard, which is very unreasonable.'

'Nay, sir, I find no fault with him on that account ; but when you were taken ill the other night, and cried "Help, help!"—A sudden spasm shot across the sick man's face.—"Something ails you, sir," said Robert hastily. 'It was very selfish of me to be making complaints at such a time : forgive me.'

'No, no ; I am better now,' gasped Kavanagh. 'I would rather hear all about it. I cried "Help, help!" you say ?'

'Yes, sir ; and then I ran in, and found you sitting up in bed, and pointing to I know not what ?'

'Well, well, and what did I say more ?' inquired the sick man nervously.

'Nothing more, sir, that was any sense. But while you wandered on, in Murphy came, and bade me leave the cabin, since you did not want me. It might have been so, but it seemed to me

you did want "help" of some sort ; and since he was drunk, and I was sober, that I was the better fitted to give it. Then he threw himself upon me, and strove to turn me out by force. I left my mark upon his throat, I reckon.' Here Robert paused, stopped this time by an ejaculation from the other of pain and horror.

'What wickedness !' he murmured ; 'you might have strangled him !'

'Indeed, sir, he might have strangled *me*,' answered Robert, indignant at what seemed to him an expression of gross favouritism. 'If the big drunken brute had kept his feet, he *would* have done it. I do not shew my own regard for you, by flying like a bull-dog at the faces of your friends, but I strive to serve you, sir, as best I can—'

'You do, you *do*,' interrupted Kavanagh. 'It is an ill return to be treated thus indeed. It shall not happen again ; I will speak to Murphy.'—Robert smiled incredulously.—'Ah, you think speaking of no use ? Well, we shall see : tell Murphy to come hither at once.'

'Indeed, sir, there is no need to trouble yourself about the matter so immediately,' urged Robert ; 'when you get well and strong—'

'I said *at once*,' reiterated Kavanagh ; 'did you not hear me ?'

Robert opened the cabin-door, and there stood Murphy in close attendance.

'Mr Kavanagh wants you.'

Without bestowing a glance at the speaker, Murphy made one stride to his master's pillow, and there stood, obedient as the dog that hears the shepherd's voice, and springing to his side awaits his signal.

'I wish to speak to you, Dick, about our good friend, Robert, here. We are not in England, now, begirt by spies, and hunted by the bloodhounds of the law ; and when we were, remember, though you doubted him, this lad proved true as steel. There is no danger in his being one of us, in short, and if there were, I still would wish it. Don't speak'—his voice became imperative, and even harsh—'my mind is fixed upon it, and immovable. What you and I lack we have found in this good lad. He can use his wits and fingers too, and in the days to come will be more useful to us even than he has been. At present, he has no authority, and you (he tells me) take advantage of it to treat him as you dare not treat one of those whom I have placed under his charge. This must not be. In future, look on him as my lieutenant, my second in command, whom, in my absence, you will obey as though he were myself. And if I die—'

'The saints forbid !' ejaculated Murphy piously.

'Still, it may happen, Dick,' continued Kavanagh kindly, 'and then what would become of all these poor fellows, without a head ? I say, if I should die, this man, so far as I can make him so—and with *you* at least I *can*—is my successor. Do you hear ?'

The expression of Mr Richard Murphy's countenance was curious to witness. Rage, dislike, humiliation, were struggling within him against a habit of obedience to his master's wishes that was second nature ; he looked from Chesney to Kavanagh, from Kavanagh to Chesney, in such pitiable perplexity, that the latter, who had a generous spirit, was moved by it.

'Indeed, Mr Kavanagh,' said he, 'I have no wish to exercise authority over Murphy, but merely to be made secure from any such outrage as he put upon me the other night.'

'That I feel sure of, Robert, or I should not intrust you with it. I know too well, from my own case, how ill it is to possess a power that one is not fit to wield.' Here he stopped and sighed.

'Arrah, be aisy, Mr Frank; sure, yourself is the king of men,' whispered Murphy reassuringly; but the other took no notice.

'Yes, that is the only way,' continued he thoughtfully. 'I tried to make you a friend of this good lad, Dick, but that, through your own fault, has failed. I now make him your superior. You could not give your good-will, it seems; but there will be no excuse for refusing your obedience.'

'And is the likes of him to come between me and you, Masther Frank?' asked Murphy pitifully. 'No, Dick; no man can do that, I think, nor woman either,' answered Kavanagh tenderly. 'Don't fret, man. The lad has had honour done him, but not at your expense. Give me your hands, both of you.'

He placed them in one another as he had done once before on the night of their first meeting. Robert grasped Murphy's fingers heartily enough, and Murphy returned the pressure, keeping his eyes, however, intently fixed upon Kavanagh's face.

'You see what I am doing, master, for your sake,' they seemed to say.

'That's well, Dick; now leave us for the present, for I have some private talk to finish with Mr Chesney.'

'Very good, Masther Frank.—Perhaps, sir'—and here he turned to Robert with an air of hesitating respect—'you will kindly let me know when you have done, and I may come back again.' As he said these words, he ran out of the cabin as though he could bear the scene no longer; to address Robert as his superior thus voluntarily, had probably been the hardest task which he had ever set himself to do.

'Poor Dick!' ejaculated Kavanagh remorsefully. 'I think that ought to content you, lad.'

'Indeed, sir, it was more than I asked, or even desired,' answered Robert.

'Perhaps,' replied the other; 'but it was necessary. I remember when I was at the military college—years ago in France—the only way by which a certain worthy cadet could be saved from a most unmerited persecution was by creating him a sub-lieutenant; and a first-rate officer he made.'

'You were in the army, then, sir?' asked Robert simply.

'Yes and no: that is, I had a military training, which might have been useful had circumstances turned out as they were expected to do.'

'In Ireland, I suppose?'

'Yes; there is no need to make a secret of the matter now, even if you have not guessed it. I nourished a vain dream, which was only real inasmuch as it was dangerous. On board ship, I was obliged to be Denton; in Herne Street, I was Wilson. You see I keep nothing from you, lieutenant.'

'Yes, sir,' replied Robert naively. 'I should like, however, if you would not take it ill, to ask you one more question.'

'What is that?' Kavanagh's tone became sud-

denly impatient, and even suspicious, and under pretence of settling his skull-cap on his head, he covered his eyes with his hand. 'I never promised to tell you all my private affairs, however.'

'Indeed, sir, I should not be so impertinent as to inquire into them. But might I ask what sort of man is he whom they call "Misther Maguire?"'

Kavanagh removed his hand from his face, and revealed an expression of great relief.

'Oh, Maguire! answered he gaily. 'Yes, he is a strange fellow, and I do not wonder that he has excited your curiosity. Moreover, it is only right it should be satisfied, since it is likely he will be more or less mixed up with our own fortunes. Well, he was the son of a gentleman on a neighbouring estate to that of my father, and who, like the bad boys of the story-books, ran away at an early age to sea. He led a very queer life, I fancy—what is called "a checkered career," which is mostly black, you know; though I don't believe there was ever much real harm in him. When he returned home after a quarter of a century, he found matters worse than he had left them. His father "evicted" by the mortgagees from what had once been his own property, and other unpleasanties, such as only occur in Ireland. Then he got mixed up in "the troubles," and had to flee the country and save his skin—like myself.'

'Nay, sir, not so; for it seems to me that he had nothing to lose, and all to gain, whereas you had an estate at stake.'

'I had at one time—yes,' returned Kavanagh thoughtfully. 'There is something in what you say, perhaps, though we have no right to impute selfish motives. You do not like Mr Maguire, it seems.'

'I don't dislike him, sir, personally, but I confess that—of late—he has seemed to me to be a dangerous man.'

'Dangerous! why dangerous?' inquired Kavanagh quickly.

'Well, sir, I can't exactly say; but this man has great influence among our people, and if he chose to use it ill, there might be great danger. I am certain, at all events, that that is the captain's opinion. You have been ill and confined to your cabin, so that you may not have observed it; but I notice that both he and the other officers of the ship go about armed.'

'Armed! How long has that been the case?' inquired Kavanagh with excitement, a deep flush suffusing his pale face.

'Since the day you came on deck in your real character.'

'That is strange,' muttered Kavanagh; 'very strange. Is this a matter of general remark; do the boys know it?'

'I think not, sir; they do not take much notice of anything; but there is one man that knows it beside myself, unless I am much mistaken; and that is Maguire himself.'

'Ah; then he should have told me. I mean,' added Kavanagh hastily, 'he should have confessed that he had been guilty of a foolish indiscretion. There is no harm in him, nor in my people; but there should be no ground for supposing harm. Keep your eyes open, Robert, for the future, and, above all things, your mouth shut. To talk of danger before some people is like putting a match to a fire-grate that is already laid. And now tell poor Dick that I am ready to see him. To-morrow,

or the next day, at furthest, I shall be well and about again. Good-day, lad, good-day.'

#### CHAPTER XII.—THE VOLCANIC ISLAND.

The interview was over, and clearly, as it seemed to Robert, hurried to a close by the tidings which he had just communicated. It was evident that Mr Kavanagh had been unaware of the effect produced by his own appearance among his people, and yet when informed of it, he had not expressed that disapprobation which might have been expected of him. He must surely have known more of Maguire also than he had chosen to reveal, and in that respect, as perhaps in others, he (Robert) was still, therefore, it seemed only half trusted. On the other hand, his appointment, if it could be called such, of second in command to his patron was at least a proof of extreme favour, while to the fact that it was genuine, Murphy's own behaviour abundantly testified.

Neither on the next day nor for many days afterwards did Robert again see Mr Kavanagh. That gentleman was once more reported ill, and remained in his berth visited only by Murphy and Maguire. It would have doubtless been within the scope of Chesney's newly conferred authority to insist on being admitted to the sick man's cabin ; but he took no advantage of this. The same wild cries for 'Help !' the same half-suffocated sounds were repeated as he had heard on the previous occasion, and something hinted to him that whatever might be the nature of his patron's seizures, the presence of an unaccustomed witness like himself would not be welcome to him. The ship's surgeon had attended the patient in the first instance, but of late he had not done so, since, as he explained to Robert, the two men in question thoroughly understood the case, and were competent to deal with it. The ship was by this time advanced far across the Indian Ocean, and was within a few hundred miles of the western coast of Australia, and the emigrants, no longer influenced by Maguire (whom Kavanagh's illness seemed to have greatly sobered, and who was much engaged about the sick man's person), and excited by the prospect of a termination to their tedious voyage, passed much of their time on deck, looking out for the first glimpse of land. Thus Robert made a more intimate acquaintance than he had hitherto done, not only with those under his own charge, but with the rest of his fellow-passengers, and was much struck with the difference between them. The Tipperary boys, with their wives and families, gave but little thought to their future, appearing to leave that, with great contentedness, in the hands of their patron ; while the others were never tired of speculating like children upon the new world they were so rapidly approaching, where potatoes grew without planting, and all were masters, and none servants. But just when they seemed to be on the point of realising these brilliant visions, Fortune, which had hitherto so favoured the voyage of the *Star of Erin*, turned dead against her ; a furious gale sprang up from the north-west, and drove the ship under bare poles hundreds of miles out of her course, at a pace she had never achieved when in full sail. The hatches had to be battened down, and the unhappy tenants of the steerage were reduced to a condition even worse than that in which they had been plunged at first : to the horrors of sea-sickness, were now added

unspeakable terrors. In their dark and confined quarters, amid the howling of the tempest, and the straining of the ship's timbers, they looked for nothing less than death, from dawn to night, from night to dawn. This continued for many days, and when the wind slackened and the ship became once more under control, she was pronounced by the captain to be a greater distance from the desired haven than she had been at the beginning of the gale. The sun, indeed, had once more reappeared ; the sea, like some passionate domestic despot, who, having committed endless ravage in his wrath, is astonished, now that it is over, that any one should remember it, wore a thousand smiles ; but the poor passengers huddled together on deck, and heart-sick with hope deferred, refused to be comforted, and believed themselves doomed to wander over the watery waste for ever. Curiously enough, the condition of Kavanagh had improved during the late commotion, and his first act, when circumstances permitted of an interchange of talk—which had been absolutely impossible during the gale—was to send for Robert, who, to his great surprise, found his patron up and dressed.

'Better, lad ; yes, I am better,' said he, in answer to his congratulations ; 'but this bout has given me a lesson. If I had died, it would have been heavy on my conscience—which, alas ! has its weight to bear already—that I should have left my sheep with a shepherd indeed, but without the means of pasturing them. Murphy, it is true, is as honest as this blessed sunlight that at last is shining on us again ; but with all the good-will in the world to serve me, he has no head for management of any kind. Here are three thousand pounds in English notes, of which you will take charge, taking care at the same time that nobody suspects you of being my banker except for current expenses. When occasion arises, you will make disbursements on our common account and on that of my poor people, which I will audit from time to time. Then, if anything should happen to me—I don't say I apprehend it, but I think it right to take precautions—I leave you my trustee and guardian in their interests : when you shall once have given them a fair start, the balance may be retained by yourself, or, what is better, given to your sweetheart, from one who never knew her, but who wishes her well, as her marriage portion.—It is my own property, man,' cried Kavanagh with sudden vehemence, and observing Robert to hesitate. 'Do you suppose that I would give away what is *not* my own ?'

'Indeed, sir, I was not thinking that at all,' answered Chesney earnestly, 'but only of your great kindness and generosity : most sincerely do I trust that you may long live to expend this money to greater advantage, doubtless, than I should use ; but it is a very large sum ; and though such confidence cannot but be gratifying to me, the responsibility is great.'

'Nay, nay, lad,' said Kavanagh reassuringly ; 'one can only do one's best, which I have no fear but that you will do. While as to the mere safety of the money, it will be more secure with you, since you will never be suspected of the possession of it, than with myself. I have had warnings that my life is at best a precarious one ; and though I flatter myself, could I once escape from this cursed imprisonment, and set a free foot on land—What's that ?'

A sudden turmoil had broken out on the deck

above them ; clappings of hands and shouts of joy were heard ; and while they listened, the cabin-door was flung open by Murphy, who rushed in, in a wild state of excitement, crying : ' Land, Land ! By noon, Mr Frank, we'll be there.'

' It is impossible,' answered Kavanagh incredulously, rising from his seat, nevertheless, with an eager light in his eyes. ' The captain told me only an hour ago that it would take us a week to make the coast.'

' Sure the coast is ready-made then, for there it is, not half-a-dozen miles away. I've been up the mast-head to look, and there it lies all green and glorious like Ould Ireland herself, with just a bit of hill like the Hill of Howth growing out of the middle of it.'

' The man is drunk,' said Kavanagh contemptuously. ' Give me your arm, Robert, and help me on deck, that I may see with my own eyes.'

The joy and excitement in Murphy's face faded as suddenly out as when the slide is withdrawn from a magic-lantern, and leaves the blank white sheet. ' Drunk,' am I ?' muttered he, as he watched them go slowly out ; ' and "give me your arm, Robert?" is it ? Well, I obey you, Mr Frank, and therefore obey him ; but—how I hate him.' On deck, both passengers and crew had all assembled, and it was with some difficulty that Robert could make way for his companion through the crowd, to where the captain stood talking to one of the officers of the ship.

' What is it ?' asked Kavanagh eagerly : ' what is this nonsense about land ?'

' I know no more than yourself,' answered the captain coldly and ungraciously, as Robert thought, considering that he was addressing the most influential passenger on board his ship, and moreover a sick man. ' That land it is, there is no doubt, as any glass will shew you, but how it comes there, is more than I can tell. It is not in the chart, that's certain. Nor can it be the mainland, which lies more than five hundred miles to eastward.'

Here a telescope was offered by some bystander, and Kavanagh endeavoured to adjust it, but whether from excitement, or the weakness arising from his late illness, his hand was so unsteady that he could make no use of it. ' There ; do you take it, Robert,' said he pettishly, ' for I am too weak to hold it. Tell me what you see.'

' It is land without doubt,' answered Robert, and indeed, to the naked eye, what had seemed a dark cloud resting on the eastward horizon, was already assuming colour and consistency ; ' and if an island, it is a large one—large but low, except for one green hill in the centre ; but I see no trace of trees.'

' If this was in the Chinese waters,' observed the firm but quiet voice of Maguire, ' I should be at no loss to tell you what it was.'

' Neither should I, if I were nearing the Needles,' answered the captain contemptuously, ' for then I should say it was the Isle of Wight.'

' And that would be a very good guess for a home-voyager,' answered Maguire coolly. ' A man need only have been as far as Palermo, however, to see an island that has come up out of the sea, and here, if I am not much mistaken, is one of the same kidney. Off the Philippines I have seen half a dozen of them.'

' You know a deal more about seafaring, Mr Maguire, it seems to me, than when you first came

on board,' remarked the captain significantly, and regarding the object of debate attentively through his glass ; ' and I don't mean to say that you mayn't be right as to this island. I've seen Nerita myself in the Mediterranean, which sprang up, as you say, in a single night ; but this has grass upon it, and looks a well-established concern enough. I only hope it has got fresh water, for we shall want it before many days are out.'

' There is something shining like a silver thread,' observed Robert, ' and running down from the hill-side towards the sea : that must surely be a river.'

Half an hour more resolved all doubts. The island in question, which had very deep water all about it (a circumstance that corroborated the idea that it was of volcanic origin), so that the ship could sail quite close to it, was of considerable dimensions. It was covered with such beautiful verdure as delighted and refreshed the sea-wearied eyes of all, and had at least two considerable streams of fresh water, still more welcome to the captain's view. A little bay on its more remote shore—the eastern one—formed a natural harbour, and into this the ship was steered and anchored. To see the enfranchised emigrants rush on shore, some rolling like dogs or horses for very joy upon the shining sward, some running along the shore as though to convince themselves that they had at last the use of their legs, and all shouting with mirth, was like beholding a school on 'breaking-up day.' Kavanagh himself looked bright and hopeful as Robert had never seen him since they had set sail. ' Murphy,' said he, ' I spoke to you harshly and unjustly a while ago. Put that down to my ill health, not to ill-will. Come, let us take our first walk upon dry land together. Do you think that you and Robert, between you, could pull me up yonder hill ?'

' One's plenty, Mr Frank, for a job like that,' answered Murphy eagerly : ' just get astride upon my neck—so—that's well. There is not a mother yonder with a child in her arms that feels the burden as light as I do now.' And before Robert could offer his assistance—which indeed he would have been loath to do, for Murphy's sake, who would certainly have deeply resented it—the faithful fellow had started for the hill with his master on his shoulders. Robert walked rapidly by their side, for no slow pace would have kept up with Murphy's giant strides, in readiness to give his aid should it be required ; and in that order the three left the crowd and climbed the hill. Arrived at the top, Kavanagh descended from his human steed, who had shewn no signs of weariness, and proceeded to survey this singular territory ; his reconnaissance being supplemented by Robert's eyes, who used the glass. To the latter, accustomed to the thick foliage of the forest, the island looked bare and bald enough ; but whatever its foundations might be composed of, the upper soil was evidently rich, and even at the elevation at which they stood far from rocky or barren. Its whole extent could not be less than ten miles long by eleven broad.

' It is quite a little kingdom in itself,' murmured Kavanagh delightedly. ' Then why should you not reign over it, Master Frank ?' This rejoinder came from Murphy, and was a much more apt one than might have been expected from his lips ; but it was characteristic of the man and of his relations with Kavanagh, that, whereas except for some gleams of humour which seemed themselves to be unconsciously uttered, he

was for the most part dull and unready, it was often otherwise when speaking with reference to his patron's interests ; his wits seemed sharpened by the anxiety he felt to further them ; and though judgment was often wanting even then, readiness never failed him. The suggestion he now made, doubtless out of the abundance of his personal loyalty, rather than with any serious idea of its being realised, seemed to strike Kavanagh amazingly.

'Reign over it!' exclaimed he, striking his palms together. 'Why not? Dick, you have more wit than ten Maguires. Here is good soil, fresh water, and room to increase and multiply. Why not establish our own colony *here*, where no flag flouts the breeze, to remind us that we are still slaves as well as exiles?—Your judgment, Robert, is of the sober sort; what think you of the plan?'

'Well, sir, we can't eat grass, nor can the women and children lie on the bare earth'—

'There is no need for either,' interposed Kavanagh enthusiastically. 'We have provisions enough and to spare for months, as the captain told me. We have tents, too, and even houses that can be set up in a few hours. We have seeds in plenty, and agricultural implements of all sorts. I have money, too, far beyond what you imagine—for there was no need to tempt you with the knowledge of it, good lad, to follow my fortunes. Well, why should I not employ it to get all we need from the mainland—clothes, timber, cattle'—

'The whisky is getting low,' suggested Murphy delicately.

'Be serious, you omadhawn.—Why not, Robert, I say, use Melbourne as our storehouse, but in other respects be independent of the world? The prospect seems a dream—a golden dream; but why should it not be realised? Why should I not be king, as Murphy puts it, and you prime-minister? Why shouldn't your Lizzy,' he added in Robert's ear, 'come out and marry you? A parson shall be imported for the very purpose, look you; there's my hand on it—and after my death you shall be king yourself, and all your progeny princes and princesses. Think of it, man—think of it!'

The air and tone of the speaker were wild and excited, beyond anything that Robert had yet seen in him; but the theme itself seemed to excuse it. Strange and fanciful, indeed, it was, but by no means ill adapted to win the ear of youth; and, moreover, there was no doubt, whatever might be the final success of the scheme, that it could be at least inaugurated. To Robert, it is true, it lacked the attraction which it possessed for his patron, in its restriction to his own people and dependants; but, on the other hand, here was a home assured for Lizzy and her kindred at the outset; while the idea of his wielding so large a personal influence in the new colony, both at present and in the future, was also, doubtless, not without its influence.

'Do you think your people would themselves be in favour of such a plan?' inquired Robert doubtfully.

'Do I *think*? no; I am certain.' And Murphy laughed a laugh that carried more conviction with it than even his master's words.

Robert himself, indeed, had little doubt that most, if not all, of Kavanagh's immediate followers would hail the plan with delight, and not at all the

less so because of its romantic wildness; but still the natural prudence of his character, and his very knowledge that the temptation of Lizzy's immediate coming was having a greater weight with him than *all* other considerations, bade him pause.

'It matters not whether we prosper here or not,' continued Kavanagh persuasively. 'I shall get the captain to sell me a boat or two—one, at least, large enough to accomplish the voyage to Melbourne, from which place we could send over for the rest. Then all could start afresh, as we had originally intended to do. But I feel certain we shall prosper here. The captain has already taken the bearings of the island, and pronounced on the harbour very favourably: if we ourselves should not colonise it, be sure that others would. You were saying but a while ago how gladly you would welcome your friends the Alstons in the New World; with how much greater pride can you now invite them to our own private territory! No money shall be spared by me to further your wishes as to their coming; and if the ship that brings them from England cannot be induced to steer a few days out of her course, a vessel shall be hired to bring them out from Melbourne immediately upon their arrival. It is a romance, my lad, I grant, from first to last; but there is no reason why it should not be a Romance of Reality.'

The enthusiasm of the speaker's tone, the brilliancy of the future he depicted, the brightness and gaiety of the scene that lay stretched before them, combined together to sweep away Robert's last lingering doubts.

'So far as I can help you, Mr Kavanagh,' said he impulsively, 'my services are altogether at your disposal, whether here or elsewhere.'

'That's well, and spoken like yourself,' cried the other. 'For the present, then, they will be elsewhere. You must go on in the *Star* to Melbourne, and purchase all things that we may require; then return to us as soon as may be.'

'I will do my best, sir,' replied Robert hesitatingly; 'but you speak as though the affair was settled. There are your people to be spoken to, and the captain'—

'Leave the people to me,' answered Kavanagh smiling; 'and as for the captain, you may take my word for it he will be glad enough to get rid of us.—And now, Murphy, there is one thing more to be done. Two hours ago, I doubted your word when you spoke of land in sight—I am now about to make you compensation—Do you happen to have a drop of whisky in your pocket?'

'Have I a drop of blood in my body, do you mean, Masther Frank?' replied Murphy reproachfully, and producing from his coat a flask of the vintage of his native land.

Kavanagh placed it to his lips, and said: 'I name this island *Murphy's Island*,' then took a deep draught.

'The honour is too much for the likes of me, Masther Frank,' returned Dick; 'I feel quite overcome by it, and must just take a sup myself.—Mr Chesney, I drink your very good health, and a fair voyage to Melbourne.' There was something cynical in Murphy's tone, which perhaps at any other time would have excited Robert's notice; but his mind was too full of the scheme he had just heard propounded, and the hopes or dreams which it had evoked, to pay any attention to so trifling a circumstance.

"Come, let us go down and clench this matter," cried Kavanagh impatiently; "for there is not an hour to lose." And they descended to the shore accordingly.

## MARRIAGE IN CHINA.

THE Chinese marriage ceremonial, were it only for its great antiquity, is worthy of attentive consideration, and the more so, because, from the vast extent of the empire, it is a social institution common to a much larger population than that of any other country in the world. From the European point of view, the Chinese may undoubtedly be classed as a semi-civilised race; and this fact alone invests their domestic habits and customs with greater interest; and of all of them, none is more elaborate or more attractive to the general reader than the subject of the present article. Unfortunately, however, the majority of foreigners, visiting or residing at the consular ports of China, have little or no opportunity of becoming acquainted with the manner in which the marriage-rites of the natives are conducted. This arises mainly from their inability, in most cases, to converse in the language of the country; and also from the fact, that they commonly live in settlements apart from the Chinese cities, properly so called, and that their intercourse is solely with the trading part of the population, who communicate with them in a jargon known as 'pigeon (or pidgin) English,' and who are particularly averse to giving the inquiring foreigner an accurate or trustworthy insight into the relations of their domestic life and concerns. Hence it is easy to understand that persons may pass many years in China without knowing more of the marriages, funerals, &c. of the people among whom they dwell, than can be gathered from seeing a chance procession in the streets.

In China, as in most other countries, betrothal or engagement precedes marriage, but the parties chiefly concerned have commonly but little to do with the matter. The usual course pursued is for the parents of the man who seeks a wife to engage the services of a go-between, who is furnished with a 'card,' or rather an oblong piece of paper, setting forth the ancestral name and 'eight characters' of the intending bridegroom. These eight characters exhibit the precise time of his birth; and the exactness required by ancient superstitious observances is so great that not only are the year, moon, and day given, but even the 'period' of the day is stated.\* In many cases, the go-between is even intrusted with the delicate duty of finding an eligible family to open negotiations with.

A suitable family having been selected, the card is handed in, and an offer of marriage is made; if the proposal be entertained, a species of sooth-

sayer is consulted to determine whether the eight characters of both parties are sufficiently in harmony for them to become husband and wife. Should he come to an affirmative conclusion, and the offer of marriage be accepted by the lady's parents on her behalf, the go-between takes back to his principals a 'card,' giving the same particulars, as mentioned above, with regard to the damsel. At this point, a difficulty may occur, for if anything which is deemed *unlucky* should chance to happen, even though it be of such a nature as would appear most trifling and ridiculous to us, the whole affair is not unfrequently broken off.

The betrothal being now duly arranged, the intending bridegroom and his family forward various presents—such as ornaments for the hair, bracelets, food, &c.—in ratification of the engagement; and in return, the family of the bride-elect send some trifling articles. The value of the presents sent at this and other periods, of course, varies materially according to the position and wealth of the contracting parties, and furthermore, they are usually sent to various members of the two families, and are not confined to the affianced pair.

The nuptial sedan-chair is sent by the family of the bridegroom on the day before the wedding, sometimes on the day itself. It is red in colour, and is borne by four men, wearing the traditional official hats or caps, which are made of felt or straw, according to the season of the year. The sedan-chair is generally accompanied by a servant bearing a bridal umbrella, which is also red, and of the same style as is used in official processions, but not in the least like the European article; others carry red lanterns and lighted torches, and there is a band of music (?) in attendance.

On the nuptial day, the bridegroom undergoes the peculiar ceremony of placing a cap on his head, and a blessing is said over him. Some say that if strict etiquette be followed, the bride-elect should weep for the ten evenings preceding the wedding, in which ceremonial observance it is customary that she should be joined by her immediate female relations, whom she is about to leave.

The bride, attired in an elaborately embroidered robe, is generally conducted to her sedan-chair early in the morning of the happy day, crackers exploding, and music playing—or rather *braying*—the while. We have heard that there are districts where a custom obtains that wheaten cakes should now be thrown up in the air and caught in a coverlet; a ceremony which cannot be considered much more absurd than the practice of throwing the slipper at home. Then the procession starts for the bride's new abode, accompanied by more crackers and more so-called music. First in order come four lanterns, two with the bridegroom's clan name painted on them, and two with the bride's. These lanterns are usually of paper, and are carried aloft in the air by their bearers at the end of poles; the characters pasted on them are red. The umbrella, torches, and *soi-disant* music are also there. Friends and relatives from *both* sides escort the bride; and when the procession has accomplished about half its journey, the 'receiving of the bride'

\* It may be mentioned here that the Chinese do not divide the day into twenty-four hours, but into twelve 'periods' of two hours, and call each by a distinct name; for example, the time from nine P.M. to eleven P.M. is called 'Hai.'

takes place. At this period, the lady is supposed to assume her husband's clan name, so the lanterns bearing her clan name now disappear from the procession, as also do her relatives and friends, and she, now proceeds with her husband's representatives. Having arrived at the bridegroom's house, the procession halts amidst loud explosions of crackers, &c. The bride is now assisted out of her sedan-chair, and after some curious—and, to foreigners, very ridiculous—customs have been attended to—one being, that, in some parts of the country, she has to step over a saddle placed at the doorway of her new home—she joins her husband in the worship of heaven and earth, and also of the ancestral tablets—a highly important part of the marriage ceremony in most provinces of China. The newly wedded pair kneel down and bow solemnly before a table, which is placed in a prominent position near the end of the principal apartment of the house, and towards the open air—by this action signifying that they are paying obeisance to heaven and earth; they then turn, and in a somewhat similar manner worship the ancestral tablets, which are placed on a table in the back part of the hall.

This all-important rite having been carefully observed, some slight changes are made in the bride's dress, preparatory to the nuptial meal. Some render this by the expression 'marriage supper,' but as it commonly takes place during the middle of the day or in the afternoon, the term appears to be inappropriate. A special table is set out for the bride and bridegroom, at which they sit down and pretend to eat, and exchange cups (*chiao pei*). Without this ceremony, no marriage seems to be considered complete; and it appears, as it were, to seal the contract, being looked upon as the most indispensable part of the whole proceedings. The table spoken of is arranged in the prescribed form in the *Tung-fang*, or bridal chamber, and not in the room with the other guests, but yet so that the bride and bridegroom are in view of all; at this stage, the husband, most frequently for the first time, is permitted to see his wife's face. Etiquette requires that the bride should fast, even though, during the day, it is often the case that presents of food are more than once sent to her from her own home. The guests at a later period partake of an entertainment separately; and it is customary for them to make money presents to the family, probably to assist in defraying the expenses they are put to.

The feasts and ceremonies attending a marriage usually occupy two days or more, the male relations and friends being invited on the first day, while the second is set apart for the reception of the female guests.

On the morning of the second day, the custom of 'coming out of the (nuptial) chamber' is observed, on which occasion the newly wedded husband and wife again pay their devotions to the tablets of the former's ancestors. The deities which preside over the kitchen are next propitiated by certain acts of worship. Afterwards comes a ceremonial call on the bride's family, an invitation having first been received, and sedan-chairs sent for the accommodation of the pair, who, it must be noted, occupy *different* chairs. It is arranged that the two sedan-chairs should both start and reach their destination *separately*. Their arrival is greeted by loud explosions of

crackers, without which it seems that hardly any Chinese ceremony is complete. During the visit, great care is taken to use only words of good omen, and all the proceedings are regulated by etiquette, the husband and wife seeing but little of one another, even when a banquet is given in their honour. They return home separately, the husband going first. In any calls that may afterwards be made, the same routine is observed, and the wife is never actually accompanied by her spouse. It is sufficiently well known that in endless matters the Chinese custom is the very reverse of that which prevails amongst ourselves, so the reader will perhaps not be astonished to learn that in the Middle Kingdom husbands do not, as a rule, appear in public in the company of their wives.

Theoretically, no marriage can take place during the time of mourning for the death of an emperor; but as the full term of mourning is twenty-seven months, this would be highly inconvenient, so the restriction is practically confined to the first hundred days after his majesty's decease; and even this is probably very little observed, except by officials, and the residents in the capital and its immediate neighbourhood.

It is the rule in China that persons of the same clan name shall not intermarry, and this prohibition (for it amounts to that) extends even to remote cousins, but only prevents the marriage of cousins in the first and other degrees, in case their clan name be the same. To explain the matter more clearly, we will suppose that a man, whose clan name is Tang, has four children—two sons and two daughters—all having male and female offspring. The children of the daughters may intermarry, but those of the sons may not; the son's children, however, are not debarred from marrying into their aunts' families.

One or two odd customs may here be briefly alluded to. Sometimes betrothal takes place before birth—that is to say, mothers betroth their unborn children on the chance of their turning out to be of opposite sexes! Again, if a man, after becoming engaged to a girl, should die before the marriage can be completed, it now and then happens that the affianced bride will leave her own relatives and go to his parents' house, and there become one of the family, as much as she would have done if the marriage had actually taken place; this is more especially the case if her promised husband chance to be an only child.

Widows are rather hardly treated in the Celestial Empire in the event of their desiring to marry again, for such marriages are decidedly looked down upon, and no family of any position in the social scale will allow one of its members to enter into such a contract. Among the poorer classes of the community, however, a man occasionally marries a widow, because it is a more economical course to pursue. Various disabilities attach to a widow in the matter of ceremonial; for example, on a second marriage she is only allowed to use a common, small sedan-chair, carried by two men, instead of the more roomy and gorgeous conveyance ordinarily employed.

In the matter of divorce, which is of rather rare occurrence, all is in the husband's favour. If he be so minded, he can get rid of his wife for various reasons which seem absurd to us. As far as we are aware, no legal process is necessary; and the outraged or discontented husband gives his wife

what may be called a bill of divorce, which in this case is a document sealed with his private seal in the presence of witnesses, who are often the woman's own relatives !

### L I G H T   A N D   S I G H T .

ALL matter may be classed under two heads—the luminous and the non-luminous. The latter can only produce in us the sensation of sight when in the presence of a luminous object. Thus, every non-luminous body that we see is only seen by reflection of the light derived from some luminous body. One writer upon the subject says : 'This distinction of bodies' [into luminous and non-luminous], 'obvious as it seems, was not really fully comprehended by the ancients. According to them, vision was performed by something which emanated from the eye to the object ; and the sense of sight was explained by the analogy of that of touch. In this view, then, the sensation was represented as independent of the nature of the body seen ; and all objects should be visible, whether in the presence of a luminous body or not. This strange hypothesis held its ground for many centuries. The Arabian astronomer, Alhazen, who lived in the latter part of the eleventh century, seems to have been the first to refute it, and to prove that the rays which constituted vision came from the object to the eye.' The last part of this statement is not strictly true. For the poet-philosopher, Lucretius, who was born in b.c. 95, pronounced views on the subject, which, though not exactly in accordance with modern theories, shew that he understood that the perception of bodies by sight was caused by something proceeding from the bodies themselves, and not from the eye. Far as he might be from the truth, his views had sufficient correctness in this respect to make him arrive at very fair results.

The Lucretian theory proceeds on the supposition that 'pictures or thin shapes are emitted from things off their surface.' A sort of film or rind is supposed to proceed from the body seen to the eye ; and the philosopher supports this idea with the example of a number of people seated in a theatre under coloured awnings, from which they receive the colour of the canvas, and appear to be dyed with its hues.

Now, smell, smoke, heat, and such-like things stream off bodies in a diffused state, and preserve no distinctness. This is because they are produced from the interior of the body, and the films get torn in their exit. But the films that produce the impression of sight are formed of minute particles, which are on the outside of the objects, or, as Lucretius puts it, 'are ready to hand stationed in front rank.' Thus, they are not torn, but convey a distinct impression. Moreover, says he, these shapes may not only proceed from real objects, but may be also spontaneously generated, and wander about in the air ; and from the very independent nature of their production, they possess the power of altering their forms into shapes of every possible

kind. Which is simply an ingenious explanation of ghosts. Now, with regard to real objects, these films are supposed to be incessantly streaming off the surface, and flying through the air. When they come in contact with certain substances, such as glass, they pass readily through them ; but rough stone and wood they cannot pass through ; for they are so torn by the substance that they produce no impression of vision. But when an object both shining and dense, as a mirror, is introduced, the films cannot pass through it, neither can they be torn ; therefore, they stream back to us.

The whole theory is, considering the state of science at the time, very complete ; it shuns no difficulties, but attempts to explain every phenomenon that was then known. We find set forth as above the difference between transparent and opaque bodies, and the theory then attacks the subject of reflection. Now, in the case of reflection, the image appears to be as far behind the mirror as the object is in front of it. This is explained, and so is the distorted appearance of objects seen by means of a concave or convex mirror.

The velocity of light is touched upon, and in this matter the view is that which has been since proved true, though not universally known, namely, that the transmission of light from object to object (otherwise sight) is not absolutely instantaneous, though of tremendous rapidity. Lucretius tries to prove the great velocity of light by the experiment of placing a tub of water in the open air at night, and seeing the stars immediately imaged therein. Next, we have an explanation of the means by which we judge the distance of an object, for the film proceeding from it drives in front of it all the air between the object and our eyes, and this air has to pass through the pupil before vision takes place ; all of which occupies but an exceedingly short time. This idea is employed to shew how it is that a body when reflected appears to be as far behind the mirror as it really is in front of it. Distance, too, distorts things, and all the angles of a distant body appear rounded off ; for the images, through contact with the air for a considerable distance, get blunted.

Shadows, of course, and their following the motions of the body, are easily explained ; for 'because the earth in certain spots successively is deprived of light wherever we intercept it in moving about, while that part of it which we have quitted is filled with light, therefore that which was the shadow of our body seems to have followed us unchanged in a direct line with us.'

So much for the very ancient notions on the subject. The first distinct step in the science was taken by Descartes, who promulgated the hypothesis of emission, as it is called : that light consisted of small particles emitted by the *luminous* body, and he tried to explain the phenomena of optics on that supposition. But Newton first reduced this notion to mathematics, and the theory is usually looked upon as his. The difficulty of reconciling these ideas with facts, and the consequent arbitrary laws invented, were found very unsatisfactory. So, in 1664, was propounded by Hooke the wave-theory, which has now gained universal favour, and is as clearly established as such things can be.

Before stating this theory, it is necessary to explain the nature of waves. Take a cord, and attach one end to a fixed point, and hold the other

in the hand. If, then, vibrations be excited by moving the hand up and down, the consequence is that a wave travels the whole length of the cord. Now, here the motion of each particle is up and down, or perpendicular to the direction of the cord, but the result is an undulation travelling along the cord. Thus, a wave may be looked upon as a transmission of motion, not of substance. This may easily be shewn in waves of another sort. A stick on the surface of water which has been disturbed is tossed up and down by the undulations, but is not carried along with them. The theory of light is, then, that every luminous body excites vibrations or undulations of an all-pervading elastic ether; which vibrations are communicated from particle to particle of the ether, and on reaching the eye, produce that sensation which is called sight.

This theory accounts satisfactorily for the different phenomena which have come under observation; but the applications of the theory are too difficult and technical to be embodied in a popular article like the present. The only one at all suitable for this is the explanation of refraction, which I will endeavour to put as simply as possible. Every one knows what refraction is—the bending of a ray of light on entering obliquely some substance of different density from that which it leaves. The most familiar illustration is that of a stick partly immersed in water, when the part immersed seems to be bent towards the surface of the water.

Instead of a wave of light travelling from one substance to another, suppose a column of men marching obliquely towards a sharply defined piece of ground, the nature of which will retard progress, the difficult ground being on their right front. The first to reach it is the right-hand man, who will be first retarded; then the second, and so on. Thus, when all the column is on the more difficult ground, the left will have gained on the right, and the direction of the front will be changed. If, then, they continue to march in a direction perpendicular to their front, their line of march will be altered. In just this way is a ray of light refracted in passing from air to water or glass. It is interesting to follow out the results of bending or refraction of rays, and to trace to this cause the production of those brilliant colours which are called prismatic, and so to reach the science of spectrum analysis. But the object of this article is merely to compare modern views on the subject of light and sight with those of an ancient philosopher; and beyond this point Lucretius does not go.

#### M Y J A C K.

ALONG the roof-line, sharp and red,  
The black crows stand against the sky,  
And windy clamourings are bred  
Within the elm-trees standing nigh.  
Hard clinks the chapel's evening bell,  
The mill-wheel answers dreamily;  
Whilst from the deep carnation sky  
A glory rolls down field and fell:  
It smites the mountain to the north,  
It burns upon the window free,  
Where Jack stands up, with eyes of mirth  
And clapping hands, to welcome me.

Dear lad, again, the wild gold hair  
Makes ringlets in the autumn wind,  
And in those eyes, so blue and fair,  
The sweet, fresh soul has grown more kind.

How quaintly, too, those arms are set—  
In indolent, and frank repose,  
Upon the long green box, where grows  
The wild thyme mixed with mignonette !

O happy shout ! the choiring lark,  
Caged coyly by the glinting pane,  
Ne'er uttered, between light and dark,  
A blither, a more natural strain.

Come down, and dance into my arms,  
My heart shall have full holiday ;

Come, let us range by smoking farms,  
And popped girths of wheat and hay.

The scythe is glittering in the grass,  
The weeds are burning on the hill,

The blackbird's voice is scarcely still—  
He keeps a song for Candlemas.

O hasten, ere the stars are up,  
And bring the moonrise in their wake ;

Hast, ere the lily folds its cup,

And vanishes into the lake.

Your hand in mine, your mouth to mine,

The perfect, pure-lipped rosy shell

That on the feast of Valentine

Seven months ago bade me farewell !

Ah, Jack, that voice was in my ear

When in the night-time by the main

The German house-tops hissed with rain,  
The chimneys shuddered far and near.

Against the clouds the old house rose,  
Behind it spread the rolling wolds,

And you stood in the privet close

Among the yellow marigolds.

That dream is fact ; we too again

By long belov'd hedges walk,

And separation's bitter pain

Dies in the music of your talk.

The stifled pang, the injured sense,

The shame of doubt, the wrong of sin,

Turn into benedictions in

Your clear sun-lighted innocence.

Look, there's the sun behind the wood,

The clouds one puff of golden gloom ;

Now for the night's divinest mood—

Low laughter and the lamp-lit room.

The Publishers of CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL beg to direct the attention of CONTRIBUTORS to the following notice :

1st. All communications should be addressed to the 'Editor, 47 Paternoster Row, London.'

2d. To insure the return of papers that may prove ineligible, postage-stamps should in every case accompany them.

3d. All MSS. should bear the author's full CHRISTIAN name, surname, and address, legibly written.

4th. MSS. should be written on one side of the leaf only.

*Unless Contributors comply with the above rules, the Editor cannot undertake to return rejected papers.*

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by all Booksellers.